

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A ROSE.

I was nurtured among the green leaves in an old decayed garden, on a sunny hill side, where the free winds of heaven fanned my brow, and the gentler breezes left daily their sweet kisses on my ruby lips. While a tender bud, I modestly sought to hide beneath the rich foliage with which I was surrounded; but when I had learned to love the sunshine—when its warm beams had reached my heart—I threw off the fetters with which I had been bound, and, gazing up into the blue sky, was lost in wonder and admiration. All through the long and sunny day I revelled in the glorious sunbeams; and when the quiet even-tide came on, I bowed my head in reverence and adoration, and my grateful orisons ascended on the zephyr's breath to the great Supreme.

The solemn night succeeded to the holy hush of twilight. I gazed around me: could Eden itself have been fairer? The glad, green earth, quiet and beautiful, was bathed in Luna's silver beams: the tall grass bowed gracefully, as the night wind, with its musical voice, swept by; and the stars, holy, pure, and exceeding fair, glittered and glistened in the azure robe by which heaven seems hidden from view. "Ah!" thought I, "this world is indeed a lovely place!" and I glanced meekly upward; as I bowed again, methought a tear of gratitude lay upon my heart. I turned to my sister flowers, who, more sensitive than myself, had folded their leaves with the sun, and their petals seemed to glow with a liquid light; as I gazed, it assumed the form of a pearl, decking the brow of the sleeping flowers.

"Ah!" said I, "how can ye sleep amid so much

beauty?" but, without heeding me, they slept on, while I thanked God for the gentle dews which were falling thus, to refresh and invigorate us. And could I but be grateful for life, and the beauty with which I was surrounded? And what return could I make? None. Yes, I could unfold my blushing leaves, and open my heart to the passer by! I could load the breeze with my fragrance, and refresh the hearts of earth's weary wanderers with my odoriferous breath!

Night passed away with her gentle queen, and the fair, bright stars which followed in her train. Morning came; a few faint beams of light in the East heralded its approach: soon the Day-god arose from his couch of crimson and gold, and trod majestically the path assigned him by the Eternal.

My sleeping sister flowers awoke, and a blush mantled their dewy leaves as they met his ardent gaze. We drank of night's flowing nectar, and were again fanned by the zephyr's breath; the sweet little birds sang their morning hymn on the branches above me: a gorgeous butterfly sought my slender stem on which to rest his weary wing; and soon a little bee came buzzing about, seeking for honey-dew. Methought I was perfectly happy; but alas! for earth's happiness!

A fair young girl came tripping by: I raised my head, and sought to please with beauty, and refresh with fragrance. She came to my side, and praised my unrivalled loveliness; then I sent her the most precious odour from my incense-breathing heart. But in return she cruelly snapped my slender stem, and bore me away to her pleasant home. She placed me in a costly vase upon the mantel, and often comes to look upon her lovely rose, as she calls me, or to inhale my perfume; but she will not breathe it long: I pine for the fresh air, the glad sunshine, and the song of birds. I am fading, withering, dying: I shall soon cease to gladden her heart; and then, perchance, she will cast me forth as a worthless thing; or perhaps she may press my withered leaves between the pages of some favorite book, and bless my memory with a pleasant, grateful thought. If so, I die content—my mission is ended. I have given my fragrance to the breeze; and it has perchance been breathed by thousands! I have poured out the rich treasures of my heart for her; and while I breathe I will breathe but sweetness, and bless with perfume. But I go. Happy is he who can say with me, I have accomplished the object of my life—I have fulfilled the end of my being.

THE ROOT OF VIOLETS.

BY MRS. ALICE B. NEAL.

It was a little thing!

Yes, and it is a little thing always that makes the pleasure of a child, or its sorrow either.

Only a Violet!

But it brought tears to my eyes, that plain, simple blossom, with its fresh smell, and deep gold and purple petals. It was not a field flower, but of that variety that grew so easily with trifling care. Some give them the name of Heart's Ease.

I had not held one in my hand for many a day before; and little Martha looked quite astonished that I should ask to have one added to the bouquet she was gathering for me. I can see the child now—standing in that narrow garden, with the strip of sky above, and the close, dilapidated houses of the oldest part of the city, crowding its very borders. It was almost like fairy-land, that little nook, because I came upon it so unexpectedly.

Mrs. Lane had moved. Martha, her eldest daughter, was one of my Sunday scholars, and, furnished with the new address, the teacher commenced her search. It was far enough from Chestnut street, the old quarter in which they lived; and the low houses were filled with people very different from the gay promenades there. Children were swarming on the side-walks, with only an elder sister to attend them. Some were groping in the filthy wayside pools, or building houses of the fallen bricks, and even bones bleached in the kennel. Their squalid, ignorant mothers were scolding and toiling alternately, without health, or hope, or aim, save to live and eat and sleep, from day to day. So she came nearer to the river, and there were little shops filled with old iron, rusty hinges and broken nails, or ropes that had seen many a storm at sea, and, perhaps, a suit of sailors' clothes flapping in the wind.

"Can you tell me where Mrs. Lane lives?"

The man in the pea-jacket takes his pipe from his mouth, and stares a moment as if astonished at the speaker or the question. Then he pulls that rough, straggling lock of hair very oddly, and says—

"Round the corner, next to that old frame. Up them high steps. Guess the old woman ain't to home, though."

But it's not Mrs. Lane, it's little Martha, I have come to see, and she opens the creaking door, and looks so smiling and delighted as she finds "Teacher" there. Mrs. Lane is seldom at home. She goes out to her work early in the morning, and Martha takes care of the house, and Betty, and the baby, and gets her father's dinner. Many little girls, her age, have not yet learned to dress themselves. Nurse dresses them for breakfast, and then they go to school, but often not to study. They work book-marks and slippers, and have music lessons, and go to dancing school. But Martha leads a busy, cheerful life, and can make a bed, or cook a dinner almost as well as her mother.

Martha has been in the garden at work. She says her hands are not fit to offer to her teacher.

"Oh, then you have a garden to the new house!"

Her eyes brighten as she points to the strip of grass-plot, showing through the hall door.

"Will you let me walk in it?" asks her teacher.

So they go out together, and the teacher stoops under the clean clothes Martha has just hung up, and there they are, in the narrow, gravelled path, with clumps of Pinks, and Sweet Williams, a great Peony, Star of Bethlehem, and Love in the Mist, along the borders. Such a nice, prim, little, old fashioned garden! A plumb tree in one corner, peaches just thinking of ripening, are half hidden by the green leaves of its neighbor. Martha is pleased that the teacher thinks it so pleasant, and she begins to gather the bouquet to which I beg some fresh Violets may be added.

Martha does not think them half as pretty as the Sweet Williams, and nothing to be compared to the immense sweet-scented Peony, the pride of her heart, but her teacher is glad she is not obliged to answer, for her voice would not be very steady just at that moment.

A great many years ago, (she thinks of it all, as she stands in the snug, little garden, and watches the child,) she was a lonely, solitary little creature, far away from her own home, and the dear mother that had anticipated every wish. Her adopted mother was kind, very kind, and her new sister was an affectionate, gentle little girl. Still there were hours, and hours, that no one knew, when she was very tired at heart, and grievously thought there was no one to love her or care for her.

There was no garden attached to the high, square brick house, with its wide rooms, and great sounding halls. But one day, the child found a single Violet root growing in the stones of the terrace that surrounded it. How it came there she did not know, or how it kept its hold where there was so little earth. But it lived, and thrived, and she visited it in secret, and called it hers. One bright spring morning a blossom was found, unfolding in all its beauty. Her heart

could not retain the new joy. So the little Louise came, and saw, and admired, but she did not offer to touch it with her white, dimpled fingers. By and by, there were three blossoms in one morning. Then one was plucked, and laid on the breakfast table, a mute offering to the kind, adopted mother. And, sometimes, when the Sabbath bells rang, the child slipped away, and brought two Violets, one for Louise, to carry with them to the church.

Cousin Alice could almost feel the sunshine of these bright Sabbath mornings, and hear the church bells chime, as they walked slowly behind the rest, and wondered why their blue bonnets were always worn on Sunday, with the wide cambric pantalettes they admired so much! Then they would look at the purple Violet, or perhaps press its soft, velvet petals to their lips, and look in each other's eyes with a smile.

These Violets could not have been sold for a farthing, all that ever grew there. Cousin Alice has since held bouquets that a bright gold-piece had been given for. Pink Jessamines, and waxen Japonicas, dainty Daphne with its sweet, sweet breath, and Roses with deep crimson hearts. But they were not, with all their loveliness, like the Violets, in the pleasure they conferred.

It must have been weeks that the Violets bloomed, and the children kept their little secret. It was the last morning visit, the first paid on their return from school. They wondered how many blossoms would be out, as they opened their sleepy little eyes, and visions of purple, gold and green leaves illuminated the dull spelling book.

But one sad and sorrowful day, long to be remembered, the sheltered little nook was empty! It was too great a loss to be realized. At first, they could do nothing but sit down and cry, with their pinafores over their faces. Then inquiry and search commenced. The poor Violet root was found, flung out like a worthless weed, and withering, with all its flowers, in the scorching sun. It was so wanton, that robbery of their pleasures, and so hard to bear when the elder boys only laughed, and said "it was on purpose to tease them!" And spies they had been!

We tried to make it grow again, but it was no use. We watered it, and tied up the withered flowers, to support them. But the next day it was quite dead, and lying shrivelled and dusty upon the ground.

This was the memory that made the Heart's Ease so much more beautiful to Cousin Alice than Martha's gayer flowers. She was afraid they would all be withered before the end of her long walk, and so left them beside the bed of a sick class-mate of Martha's, who lived in a narrow court, where no flowers could grow. But she kept the Violets, and wore them all that evening, for their sweet breath, and the memory of her childhood.